

smoking, dietary change, and improvements in early detection. Specific objectives address smoking reductions for Blacks 20 and older, increases in clinical breast exams and mammograms for Black women 40 and older, and increased use of Pap tests for low-income women 18 and older.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Of all the racial comparisons made in this report, those for leading infectious diseases are by far the most dramatic. As shown in Table 34, the 1987-91 Black rates exceeded the White and American Indian rates by very large margins, except in the case of Hepatitis B where the Indian rate was higher.

When the Black rates of Table 34 are compared to those of Whites, the following rate ratios are observed: AIDS 5.7, syphilis 25.9, gonorrhea 28.2, chlamydia 6.0, tuberculosis 6.5, and Hepatitis B 2.3. While these differentials are striking, especially for syphilis and gonorrhea, the reader should keep in mind that infectious disease counts are subject to testing and reporting biases which tend to underrepresent persons tested in the private health sector.

Figure 22 displays Black and White trends in the case rates for leading infectious diseases. Recent increases in the AIDS, syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia rates of Blacks must be cause for concern. However, especially for AIDS and chlamydia, changes in reporting practices may contribute to the upward trends, which are also observed among Whites. AIDS was first reported in North Carolina in 1984, as was chlamydia in 1986, so reporting performance should have improved over time.

AIDS has emerged as a major sexually transmitted disease and has risen to the top of the public health agenda. This disease has occurred mainly among three high-risk groups: homosexual or bisexual males, intravenous drug users, and hemophiliacs.

Figure 23 depicts the state's 1987-91 Black and White percentages of AIDS cases by risk factor. Black persons with AIDS were more likely than Whites to be intravenous drug users and much less likely than Whites to be homosexual or bisexual males.

FIGURE 23
Percentage of AIDS Cases by Risk Factor
North Carolina 1987-91

